

REMARKS

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the very thorough consideration given the present application. Claims 1-8 and 16-26 are pending in the present application. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw his rejections in view of the amendments and remarks as set forth below.

I. Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §§102 and 103

Claims 1-6 and 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(a) as being anticipated by Caplan (U.S. Patent No. 3,050,087). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

not
At the outset, Applicant submits that independent Claim 1 has been amended to include "a discrete support collar coupled to an outer perimeter of the second portion". In an interview with the Examiner conducted on November 19, 2002 with Mr. Dobrowitsky, the Examiner stated that "the collar being a discrete element would overcome the [reference] to Caplan". Accordingly, Applicant submits Claim 1 is in condition for allowance. In addition, Claims 2-6 depend from Claim 1 and thus Applicant submits Claims 2-6 are also in condition for allowance.

embedding of Caplan is a form of bonding for cl 16
With regard to Claim 16, Applicant notes Claim 16 includes "bonding the reinforcement member to an exterior surface of the duct member". Applicant respectfully asserts Caplan '087 does not teach bonding as claimed. Further, in the interview on November 19, 2002, the Examiner stated that "the reference [Sindars] doesn't clearly teach bonding". As such, Applicant asserts that Caplan '087 does not teach bonding and in addition, the combination of Caplan '087 with Sindars '069 does not teach bonding as claimed. Therefore, Applicant submits Claim 16 defines over the prior art and is in condition for allowance.

Claims 18, 20, 21 and 23-25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Caplan '087 in view of Sindars (U.S. Patent No. 3,060,069). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Applicant notes Claim 18 includes "bonding the flexible duct structure to an end of the rigid duct structure". As discussed previously, neither Caplan '087 nor Sindars '069 teach, suggest or disclose bonding as claimed. Accordingly, Applicant submits independent Claim 18 is patentable and in condition for allowance. Furthermore, Claims 20, 21 and 23-24 depend from Claim 18 and thus are also believed to be in condition for allowance.

With regard to independent Claim 25, Applicant notes Claim 25 has been amended to include "bonding an attachment sleeve". As discussed above, the Examiner has indicated that bonding was not taught, disclosed or suggested by Caplan '087 or Sindars '069. Thus, Applicant submits Claim 25 is patentably distinct and in condition for allowance.

Claims 7, 8 and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Caplan '087. Claims 19 and 26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Caplan '087 in view of Sindars '069 and further in view of Roberts (U.S. Patent No. 3,076,737). Claim 22 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Caplan '087 in view of Sindars '069 and further in view of Vohrer (U.S. Patent No. 4,098,298). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Applicant respectfully notes that Claims 7, 8, 17, 19, 22 and 26 all depend from independent Claims 1, 16, 18 and 25. Applicant believes independent Claims 1, 16, 18 and 25 are in condition for allowance and thus Claims 7, 8, 17, 19 22 and 26 are also

Ink
has to
bond
flexible
sleeve
Long slit
is wrench
Bonded
around
sleeve
apart
same

believed to be in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and withdrawal of these rejections are respectfully requested.

V. Conclusion

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (248) 641-1600.

Respectfully submitted,

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ATTACHMENT FOR CLAIM AMENDMENTS

The following is a marked up version of each amended claim in which underlines indicates insertions and brackets indicate deletions.

1. (Amended) A duct assembly for coupling a pair of components in fluid connection, the duct assembly comprising:

a first portion;

a second portion in fluid connection with the first portion, the second portion being relatively more flexible than the first portion; and

a discrete support collar coupled to an outer perimeter of the second portion and abutting the first portion, the support collar being sized to prevent the formation of a stress riser at an intersection between the first and second portions to thereby render the intersection less susceptible to tearing in response to repeated flexing of the second portion.

25. A method for forming a hose assembly for coupling a plurality of components in fluid connection, the method comprising the steps of:

forming a flexible duct structure from an elastomeric material;

forming first and second rigid duct structures, the first and second rigid duct structures being formed to be relatively more rigid than the flexible duct structure;

coupling the first rigid duct structure to a first end of the flexible duct structure; [and]

coupling the second rigid duct structure to a second end of the flexible duct structure such that the flexible duct structure permits the first and second rigid duct structures to be moved relative to one another[.]; and

bonding an attachment sleeve to an end of the second rigid duct structure opposite the flexible duct structure.

26. The method of Claim 25, [further comprising the steps of:
providing an elastomeric attachment sleeve; and
bonding the elastomeric attachment sleeve to an end of the second rigid duct structure opposite the flexible duct structure.]
wherein the attachment sleeve is made from elastomeric material.